NatureKenya
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nature net

Interested in Ethnoornithology?

The Ethnoornithology Research & Study Group (ERSG) is a web-based group of people interested in the relationships between people of all cultures and the birds that are of economic, social, recreational and cultural use and interest to them.
The ERSG can be found at:
http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/Ethnoornithology

Since its establishment in early 2006, members of the ERSG have presented at and organised a number of symposia, workshops and presentations at international conferences on many aspects of ethnoornithology. Many of the presentations are available at the ERSG website. The ERSG website also has numerous links to sites of interest and many files related to ethnoornithological research and study from across the world.

Thank you to our Corporate members for their very valuable support

* Southern Cross Safaris

SEPTEMBER AT A GLIMPSE

THU 6	SAMAKI OUTING
SAT 8	TREE WALK
SUN 16	SUNDAY BIRDWALK
MON 24	TREE WALK
THU 27	KFS PARTNERSHIP TALK
BIRDWALKS EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING	
BIRD RINGING EVERY THURSDAY MORNING	

Editorial Team

Editor Catherine Ngarachu
Evening Skies Fleur Ng'weno
Naturalist Dino Martins
Action Serah Munguti

BirdLife Partner
INTERNATIONAL

Birdlife Councils meeting in Nairobi

15th -19th October 2007
Venue: Safari Park Hotel

Nature Kenya will host the Birdlife Global Council and the Council for the Africa Partnership (CAP) meeting from 15th to 19th October 2007. Nature Kenya appeals for volunteers to help with various tasks that include bird fair, registration and other tasks. If you are interested please send your application through the email address office@naturekenya.org by 14th September 2007.

Arboretum Centennial lecture, at the Nairobi Arboretum's Tree Centre:

Kenya Forest Service and public partnerships

By DK Mbugua - Director KFS
Thu 27 September 5.30pm

(Entrance fee 100 Shillings, students free. Coffee and tea is served from 5 pm. Guarded parking space provided)

Library has closed for relocation to new permanent premises. This will take a few months - watch this space for opening dates!

New Birding Marketing brochure

Announcing the launch of the first issue of Kenya Birding a birding marketing brochure for Kenya!

Bird-watching, the hobby that takes people outdoors to look at birds in their natural habitat, is the fastest growing outdoor activity worldwide. Kenya has 11% of the world's birds – more than 1090 different species of birds. Kenya's birding is some of the best in the world and this brochure will be used to introduce and attract visitors to Kenya's bird tourism product. For Nature Kenya, it supports our efforts to conserve Important Bird Areas in Kenya.

Trip to Bantu Lodge

Located on the lower slopes of Mt. Kenya, 7kms from Naro Moru

27th to 28th October 2007

Charges: Kshs, 3, 500 pp
include accommodation and meals.

Transport: Car Pool.

Activities will include Bird watching, Nature treks among others.
Carry: Walking shoes, Picnic lunch (for 27th Lunch), and Drinking water.
Register at Membership desk by 12th October, 2007.

Arabuko Sokoke Forest Excursion

by Kenya Herpetofauna Working Group (KHWG)

9th -11th November 2007

Charges Ksh 4,000 pp
Activities will include specialist talk on Amphibian/Reptiles identification and field observation techniques, frog walk and bird watching
Those interested to register by 31st October.
Registration fees is Ksh. 100 at Nature Kenya Office
Carry your own camping gear
Don't miss this exciting trip!

For more details contact: Beryl Bwong
(bebwong@yahoo.com or on 374261-4 ext 244/5)

Naturalist Corner

Natural pest control on the plains

Dino Martins

The first rays of the sun pierce the cold blanket of mist. The herd stirs, rocking softly where they stand or standing up slowly. Having spent the night lying on the ground in the cold, the cattle move slowly, as warmth returns to their frigid bones with the gentle sunlight. The painfully cold air that descends just before dawn is evident everywhere as clouds of breath emerge as balloons of white mist. But it is not just the cattle that are awakening in this idyllic scene. In the grass and thorn-bush fence of the cattle boma thousands of others are also stirring. A closer look at the ground reveals an uncomfortable sight – hundreds of tiny ticks are making their way slowly up the grass stalks and cows' legs.

In the branches of the thorny enclosure, a soft erratic buzzing can be heard. It grows louder with each passing minute of warming sunshine. These are hundreds of fat flies – both biting and scavenging kinds, waiting to descend on the hapless cows. By mid-morning, as the cattle prepare to leave the boma, the ticks and flies have begun to bite, and the cattle toss their heads and flick their tails at them. Alas, to no avail. They are completely outnumbered. But all is not lost – there are some friends on the way to help deal with the pesky insects. As the cattle cluster together before they stream out onto the grassland, a host of white birds come swooping-in, in perfect formation out of the sky.

Without wasting a moment the egrets descend and begin snapping up flies and other insects in the boma with ruthless efficiency. Some even

The egrets move through the boma methodically, reaching under tails, bellies and between thorny twigs in their cleaning efforts. The thorny gate of the boma is flung open and with their elegant escorts perched on their backs, the herd ambles out into the grassland. Now it is their turn to repay the favour by stirring insects out of the long grass with their trampling hooves. As insects leap out of the way, they are swiftly seized by the egrets' bright yellow beaks! The Cattle Egret is a widespread species that is actually increasing its range in some parts of the world where there is livestock herding. In East Africa they can almost always be found accompanying herds of large herbivores, including rhino, buffalo, elephant and eland, often perching quaintly on their backs.

Questions/Comments ?

dinojmv@oeb.harvard.edu

action

Proposed development at Lake Natron a threat to the survival of the Lesser Flamingo

Proposed development at Lake Natron is a threat to the survival of the Lesser Flamingo. The Lake Natron Resources Ltd, a company formed jointly by Tata Chemicals Ltd of Mumbai India and the National Development Corporation of Tanzania, has proposed to establish a Soda Ash extraction and processing plant at Lake Natron in Tanzania.

The proposed plant will be capable of mining 500,000 tons of sodium carbonate each year. Associated infrastructure will include a new access road, power plant, railroad, pipeline grid and perhaps a new pipeline to carry fresh water across the lake, living facilities for an estimated 1,225 construction workers and 152 permanent staff and their families.

Lake Natron is designated as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International and a Wetland of International importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Lake is the only place where the East African population of the Lesser Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus minor*, has bred in the past 45 years. The East African population accounts for 75% of the global Lesser Flamingo population. This proposed development thus threatens the survival of the Lesser Flamingo, a species classified as 'Near Threatened' in the 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

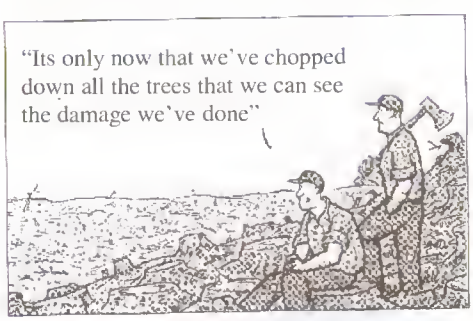
Seventeen non-government and government institutions in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia have formed the Lake Natron Consultative Forum to voice concerns regarding the proposed development. Nature Kenya is part of this forum. Other BirdLife Partners that have joined the consultative group include Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, Nature Uganda and the Ethiopia Wildlife Natural History Society.

In a consultative workshop held on 12 July 2007 in Dar-es-Salaam, Norconsult A.S Norway Ltd and Norconsult (TZ) Ltd presented the draft Executive Summary of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) study of the proposed development. Representatives of the Lake Natron consultative forum attended this workshop and raised the following key concerns:

1. The importance of Lake Natron as a key breeding ground of the Lesser Flamingo and the impact of the proposed development on this species.
2. The resultant significant impacts on tourism locally and regionally.
3. The ESIA was not fully participatory: Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia that depend heavily on Lesser Flamingos for tourist income were not fully consulted.
4. The difficulty in getting assess to the full ESIA: only an executive summary of the ESIA was made available to the interested and affected parties during the workshop. A complete copy can only be inspected by physically visiting Norconsult offices in Dar-es-Salaam.
5. Some key stakeholders, such as local community groups in Tanzania and Kenya, were not invited to the consultative workshop.
6. The proposal contravenes international conventions and agreements to which Tanzania is a signatory. Key agreements include the Protocol on Environment of the East African Community, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention and African-Eurasian Waterbirds Agreement.
7. It is estimated that approximately 130,000 litres of fresh water will be required every hour to run the plant and for domestic use. The source of such vast amounts of water in a water scarce region has not been adequately addressed.
8. Other concerns include an analysis of project alternatives; lack of a comprehensive environmental management and monitoring plan, the mode of transportation for the finished product, and lack of a comprehensive social profile for affected local communities.

It is still not clear what will happen, after the workshop. The Lake Natron Consultative Group has circulated a petition against the proposed development. If you wish to add your name to the petition, e-mail lakenatron@acc.or.ke with your name, city/town and country followed by a short message NOT EXCEEDING 10 WORDS, stating that you wish to object.

"Trees may be important environmentally, but they can't half get in the way of a good view"



For more Chris Madden Cartoons buy his book "the beast that ate the Earth" from his webdsite www.chrismadden.org

The Evening Sky September 2007

Ian Mackay and Fleur Ng'weno

Moon, September 2007
Last quarter 4th
New moon 11th
Apogee (far) 15th
First quarter 19th
Full moon 26th
Perigee (near) 28th

Planets, September 2007
In September, little Mercury rises to its highest elevation for the year. On Sept 13th, it is just north of the new moon, over the sunset. Mercury is visible the whole of September and appears higher each day, gaining the greatest altitude of 25 degrees on the evening of the 28th.

The planet Jupiter is a bright light high in the southwest, near the head of the constellation Scorpius. The moons, or satellites, of Jupiter can be seen with binoculars. If you observe them each night, you can even see them orbiting the planet. Two of the largest moons, Ganymede and Callisto, appear at maximum distance from the planet on September 9th and 26th. Note that changes in position occur very slowly when an orbiting object is seen at a large elongation. However, when the satellite is behind or in front of Jupiter it can be seen to move by the hour. This is very notable for the innermost moon Io, which circles the planet every 1.77 days. Io suffers huge tidal forces that cause volcanic activity and constant reshaping of the surface.

Mars is not visible until after midnight.

On September 1st, Mars rises in the constellation Taurus at 1 am, in the east-northeast. The star cluster of the Pleiades is above Mars and a little to the left.

Venus is a brilliant light over the sunrise just before dawn. Saturn, too,
can be seen in the morning sky from the second week of September, although it is not as bright.

September Stars
The constellation of the Scorpion, like a giant fishhook, is now in the southwest. On September 18, the Scorpion's fiery eye, the star Antares, is just north of the moon. The constellation of Sagittarius, the Archer, follows the Scorpion in the sky. The stars of Sagittarius form a shape like a giant teapot.

The bright star Altair is almost directly overhead on September evenings. It seems to be escorted by two fainter stars, one on each side. Altair is in the constellation Aquila, the Eagle.

Look north from Altair, about halfway to the horizon, to see a very bright, white star: this is Vega. East of Vega is another bright star, Deneb, in the constellation of Cygnus the Swan. Imagine Deneb as the tail, and look for the stars forming the outstretched wings and long neck of the flying swan.

Between Aquila and Cygnus there is the tiny constellation of Delphinus. It is composed of only five main stars, forming the shape of a leaping Dolphin.
High in the southeast, on the other side of Altair, is the bright star Fomalhaut.
The Milky Way stretches across the sky, passing through Scorpius, Sagittarius, Aquila and Cygnus.

Ostrich eggshell beads
Selling ostrich eggshell beads, on thread, mostly one centimeter diameter. Considerable quantity. Contact in evening best. 0722734569 and 0734329830

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GARDEN COURSE - OCTOBER 2007

Learn all about gardening from our garden experts.

Subjects will include:-
Soils
Organic Pest Control
Garden Design
Succulents & Dry Gardens
Waterwise Gardening
Shrubs, Creepers and Climbers
Indigenous Trees & Plants
Pot Plants
Lawns & Hedges
The Course will be held on five consecutive Wednesdays mornings, starting on 3rd October 2007

Register with payment at the KHS Office at the Racecourse, Ngong Rd. before 14th September 2007.
Cost: Member - Kshs. 5,000/=
Non – member – Kshs. 6,000/=
(which includes subs for 2008)

Kenya Horticultural Society Office Contacts are:
Mobile - 0721 549720
E-mail:
kenyahorti@wananchi.com.

CROPWATCH TREE NURSERY

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BRIAN WILLIAMS 0733923990
bvwilliams@swiftkenya.com
or
CAROLE HEMMINGS
chemmings@zamnet.zm

UP & ABOUT

DECLARATION

NATURE KENYA DOES NOT ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER IN RESPECT OF NEGLIGENCE OF ANY OF ITS STAFF, VOLUNTEERS OR MEMBERS ORGANISING THE OUTINGS/TRIPS OR FOR ANY LOSS, INJURY, DEATH OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY.

GREAT FACILITIES & GREAT DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS!

KINANGOP GUEST HOUSE

Perched on the Kinangop Plateau with incredible views across the Rift Valley, the farm combines tussock-grass pasture, indigenous forest, and attractive gardens. The guesthouse is comfortable and fully furnished. Visitors can enjoy hikes and walks on the farm or go further afield with local guides.

For more information, brochure and non-member rates please contact Nature Kenya. Guest House rates: Day visit 350/-

MEMBER nos	Overnight	Weekend
1 to 2 pax	4000/-	6500/-
3 pax	4,900/-	7,400/-
4 pax	5,800/-	8,300/-

20% OFF ACCOMMODATION AT THE DRIFTWOOD

On presentation of your membership card, you can get this discount off accommodation (if paying by cash or cheque) at the Driftwood Beachclub. This is a charming beachfront property with great food and service. Contact: gm@driftwoodclub.com or tel 042 20155

BIRDWALKS

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park near Langi Langi cafe, every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park near Langi Langi cafe at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, i.e. **16 SEPT '07**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

KINANGOP BIRDING

Friends of Kinangop Plateau organise birdwalks every third Friday of the month i.e. **21 SEPT '07** at 9:00 a.m around Magumu and Njambini areas. To participate contact Bakari Ng'ang'a on 0721 470215

FFJ BIRDWALK (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. **15 SEPT '07**. Please call Marlene Reid on 2491648 or 0720 949195 to confirm

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (Coast)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **1 SEPT. '07, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

LAKE VICTORIA SUNSET BIRDERS (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 057 42952 or 0734 994938 or email lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk

MT KENYA BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION GROUP (MKBCG)

The MKBCG organise bird walks to sites around Naro Moru every last Saturday of the month i.e. **29 SEPT. '07.**

For more information contact 0722 364904, 0733 937115 or 062 62071 Email: mt_kebio@yahoo.co.uk

MARURA NAROK BIRDWATCHERS

A community group near Uaso Narok Swamp, Rumuruti, which organises birdwalks every last Saturday i.e. **29 SEPT. '07.** Call 062 32718 or email olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke

TREE WALKS

Guided tree walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. **8 and 24 SEPT 07** from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the Arboretum gate. Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museums' Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday. Confrim with ornithology Dept.

NGONG ROAD FOREST WALKS

Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust nature walks held the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. 1 & **15 '07, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse. Call Simon to confirm on 3875207 or 0729 840715.

SAMAKI DAYS

Guided fish excursions on the first Thursday, i.e. **6 SEPT '07** from 9:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park. Pay Ksh 50/- per person on arrival

Yes! *Start my Nature Kenya membership*

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